Breakfast at TIFFANY'S

CHAPTER ONE

What Happened to Holly Golightly?

I sometimes visit places where I lived in the past - the houses and their neighborhoods. I like to see them again. There's a brown stone house in the East Seventies where, during the early years of the war, I had my first New York apartment. It was one room, crowded with an old red sofa and red chairs. The walls were dark and dirty from old cigarette smoke. The single window looked out onto a fire escape, a stairway that went down to the street. It wasn't a big place but it made me happy. It was my first home, and my books were there, and a box of pencils. Everything that a writer needed, I thought.

I didn't write about Holly Golightly in those days. I'm only writing about her now because of a conversation that I had with Joe Bell.

Holly Golightly was another tenant in the old brown stone house, in the apartment below mine. Joe Bell had a bar around the corner; he's still there. Both Holly and I went there six or seven times every day, not for a drink - not always - but to make telephone calls. During the war few people had a private telephone. Joe Bell took messages for us. Holly got a lot of messages.

Of course, this was a long time ago. I didn't see Joe Bell for years, not until last week. We weren't close friends but we were both friends of Holly Golightly.

It isn't easy to like Joe. He isn't married and he has a bad stomach. He's hard to talk to, except about his own interests. Holly is one of his interests; the others are dogs, a radio program that he's listened to every week for fifteen years, and musical theater.

Late last Tuesday afternoon, the telephone rang and I heard Joe Bell's voice.

I knew he was calling about Holly. He just said, "Can you come over here? It's important." There was excitement in his voice.

I took a taxi through the October rain and on the way I thought about Holly. Was she there? Was she in Joe's bar?

But there was no one in the bar except Joe. His place is very quiet. It doesn't have bright lights or a television.

"I want your opinion about something," he said. "Something very strange has happened."

"Have you heard from Holly?"

Joe is a small man with a fine head of thick, white hair. His face is always a little red: now it went even redder. "I didn't hear from her. Not exactly. That's why I want your opinion. I'll pour you a drink."

As I was drinking, he said, "Do you remember Mr. I.Y. Yunioshi? A man from Japan?"

I remembered Mr. Yunioshi perfectly. He takes photos for one of the picture magazines. He lived in an apartment on the top floor of the old house at the same time as Holly and I.

"He came here last night. I haven't seen him for more than two years. And where was he for those two years?"

"Africa."

Joe looked at me, surprised. "How do you know?"

"I read it in a magazine."

Joe gave me an envelope. In the envelope were three photos of a tall African man wearing a cotton skirt. There was a strange, wood carving of a girl's head in his hands. Her hair was very short. Her smooth, wooden eyes were too large and her mouth was too big. Was it a carving of Holly Golightly?

"What do you think of that?" Joe asked.

"It looks like her."

"Listen, boy, it is her. Mr. Yunioshi knew her immediately."

"He saw her? In Africa?"

"No, just the carving. But it's the same thing. Look." Joe turned over one of the photos. On the back was written: Wood carving, Tococul, Christmas Day, 1956.

This was the story. On Christmas Day, Mr. Yunioshi walked through Tococul with his camera. It was a small place, just a few houses. He was leaving when he saw the African.

The African was sitting outside a house, carving a piece of wood. Mr. Yunioshi liked his work.

"Show me more of your carvings," he said. Then he saw the girl's head.

"I want to buy this," Mr. Yunioshi said to the African.

"No," the African replied.

Mr. Yunioshi offered him a pound of salt and ten dollars, then offered him a watch, two pounds of salt, and twenty dollars. The African refused to sell. But for the watch and the salt he agreed to talk about the carving.

"'Three white people rode here on horses in the spring. A young woman and two men. The men were sick, and for many weeks they slept in a small house far from here. The girl liked me and she slept with me.'"

"I don't believe that part of the story," Joe Bell said. "I don't think she slept with him."

"And then?" I asked.

"Then nothing," Joe said. "She rode away with the two men. Mr. Yunioshi asked about her up and down the country. But nobody saw her."

I wasn't happy with his story. "Mr. Yunioshi's story doesn't tell us anything," I said.

"It's the only real news that we've had about her for years," Joe said. "I hope she's rich. If she's traveling in Africa, she's OK."

"She's probably not in Africa," I said. But I could imagine her there. It was a place that she would like. I looked at the photos again.

"If you know so much, where is she?" Joe asked.

"Dead. Or in a hospital for crazy people. Or married. I think she's married. She's living quietly, here in New York."

Joe thought for a minute. "No," he said. "I like to walk. I've walked these streets for ten or twelve years. I look for her all the time and I never see her... Do you think I'm crazy?"

"No. But I didn't know you loved her."

My words hurt Joe and I felt bad. He picked up the photos and put them back into the envelope. I looked at my watch. I wanted to leave.

"Wait," Joe said. "Of course I loved her. But I didn't want to touch her. I'm almost sixty-seven and I still think about sex. But I didn't want to sleep with Holly. You can love someone but not want them in that way. You stay strangers, strangers who are friends."

Two men came into the bar. It was time to leave. Joe followed me to the door. "Do you believe it?" he asked.

"That you didn't want to touch her?"

"About Africa."

For a minute I couldn't remember the story, just the thought of her on the horse. "She's gone," I said.

"Yes," he said, opening the door. "She's gone."

Outside, the rain stopped, so I walked around the corner and along the street. I went past the old apartment building. The building stands next to a church in the middle of the block. It's smarter now, with a black painted door and new windows.

I went up the steps and looked at the mailboxes. I knew none of the names, except Mrs. Sapphia Spanella's. She still lived there.

One of these mailboxes first introduced me to Holly Golightly.

A week after I moved into the apartment, I noticed a card next to the mailbox for Apartment 2. It was smartly printed, but there was a strange message on it. It said: Miss Holiday Golightly, and, below that, in the corner, Traveling. I thought about it a lot: Miss Holiday Golightly, Traveling.

One night, long after midnight, I woke up. Mr. Yunioshi was calling down the stairs. He lived on the top floor, and his voice sounded through the house.

"Miss Golightly!" he shouted, angrily.

I heard a voice from the bottom of the stairs. It was young, amused, and silly. "Oh, darling, I am sorry. I lost my key."

"You cannot ring my bell every night. Please get another key."

"But I lose them all."

"I work. I have to sleep," Mr. Yunioshi shouted. "But you are always ringing my bell..."

"Oh, don't be angry, you dear little man. I won't do it again." Her voice was coming nearer because she was climbing the stairs. "Promise you won't be angry. Then you can take those photos that we talked about."

I left my bed and opened the door a little.

"When?" Mr. Yunioshi asked. His voice was excited now.

The girl laughed. "One day," she answered. The words were unclear. She was drunk.

"Any time," Mr. Yunioshi said, and closed his door.

I went out into the hall and looked down. She was on the stairs. I could see her but she couldn't see me. Her short hair shone in the light, yellow and brown. It was a warm evening, almost summer, and she wore a light black dress and black shoes. She was thin but healthy-looking. Her mouth was large and a pair of dark glasses covered her eyes. She wasn't a child - but she wasn't a woman, either. I learned later that it was two months before her nineteenth birthday.

She wasn't alone. There was a man behind her. He was short and fat, wearing a suit. His hand was on her back, holding her with his fat fingers. That made me uncomfortable - it just looked strange.

When they reached her door, she looked in her purse for her key. Now he was kissing the back of her neck. She found the key, opened the door, and turned to him.

"Thank you for bringing me home, darling. That was kind."

"Hey, baby!" he said. She was closing the door in his face.

"Yes, Harry?"

"Harry was the other guy. I'm Sid. Sid Arbuck. You like me."

"I love you, Mr. Arbuck. But good night, Mr Arbuck." She shut the door.

"Hey, baby, let me in. You like me. I paid the check for five people, your friends! So you like me, right? You like me, baby."

He knocked on the door quietly, then more loudly. Then he stepped back. Did he plan to break down the door? But he ran down the stairs, hitting the wall angrily with his hand. When he reached the bottom, the girl opened her apartment door.

"Oh, Mr. Arbuck..."

He turned back to her, a happy smile on his face.

"The next time a girl asks for some money for the bathroom, darling, don't give her twenty-five cents!" She wasn't joking.

CHAPTER TWO

A Late-Night Visitor

"Do you think I'm very bad? Or crazy?" she asked.

She didn't ring Mr. Yunioshi's bell again. In the following days, she rang mine, sometimes at two in the morning, or three, or four o'clock. I always knew that it was her. I didn't have many friends, and no visitors at that time of night.

The first time the bell rang, I was scared. Was someone bringing bad news? Then Miss Golightly shouted up the stairs, "Sorry, darling - I forgot my key." We never met. I saw her on the stairs and in the street but she didn't see me. She always wore dark glasses and she was always well dressed. Maybe she was an actress, but she stayed out so late. Did she have time to work?

Sometimes I saw her outside our neighborhood. Once she was in an expensive restaurant, sitting with four men. She looked very bored. Another night, in the middle of summer, I was so hot that I left my room. I walked down to Fifty-first Street. There was a store there that I liked, with an old bird cage in the window. It was a beautiful bird cage, but it cost three hundred and fifty dollars. As I went home, I saw a crowd of taxi-drivers outside a bar. They were watching a group of Australian soldiers. The Australians were singing and dancing in the street with a girl. It was Miss Golightly.

Miss Golightly never seemed to notice me but I learned a lot about her. I looked in the trash can outside her door. She liked magazines and cigarettes, she didn't eat much food, and she colored her hair. She received a lot of letters from soldiers that she cut into small pieces. Sometimes I read them. Remember and miss you and please write were words that were written on many of the pieces of paper. And lonely and love.

She had a cat and she played the guitar. On sunny days, she washed her hair and sat on the fire escape with the cat. When I heard her guitar, I went to my window. She played well, and sometimes sang, too. "I don't want to sleep, I don't want to die. I just want to travel through the sky." That was her favorite song.

I didn't speak to her until September. One evening I went to a movie, then came home and went to bed. I read my book but I felt uncomfortable. Was someone watching me?

Then I heard a knock at the window. I opened it.

"What do you want?" I asked Miss Golightly.

"There's a terrible man in my apartment," she said. She stepped off the fire escape into the room. "He's very kind when he's not drunk. But now... I hate men who bite." She pulled her gray dress off her shoulder and showed me the bite. "Did I wake you? I'm sorry. But I climbed out of the window. He thinks I'm in the bathroom. He'll get tired soon and fall asleep. It was icy on the fire escape and you looked so warm. I saw you and thought about my brother, Fred. Four of us slept in the bed at home, and he kept me warm on cold nights. Can I call you Fred?"

She was in the room now, looking at me. She wasn't wearing dark glasses, and her large eyes were blue, green, and brown. They were happy, friendly eyes.

"Do you think I'm very bad? Or crazy?" she asked.

"No," I said.

"Yes, you do. Everybody thinks I'm bad. It's OK. Men like crazy, bad women. They think we're interesting."

She sat down on one of the old red chairs and looked around the room.

"This place is terrible. How can you live here?"

"I like it," I said. I wasn't pleased because I was proud of my room.

"I couldn't live here. What do you do here all day?"

I pointed at a table covered in books and paper. "I write."

"Aren't writers usually old? Is Hemingway old?"

"I think he's about forty."

"That's not old. A man doesn't excite me until he's forty-two. I taught myself to like older men. I've never slept with a writer. No, wait. Do you know Benny Shacklett?"

"No," I said.

"That's strange. He's written a lot of things for the radio. Are you a real writer? Does anyone buy your work?"

"No, not yet."

"I'm going to help you," she said. "I know lots of people and they know other people. I'll help you because of my brother Fred. But you're smaller than him.

I last saw him when I was fourteen years old. That's when I left home. He was already six foot two inches tall. My other brothers were small but Fred ate a lot. Poor Fred - he was very nice, but he was a slow thinker. He's a soldier now. I hope they give him plenty of food. Talking of food, I'm very hungry."

I pointed at some apples. Then I said, "You were very young when you left home. Why did you leave?"

She looked at me but she didn't reply. I realized later that she didn't like questions about her past. She bit the apple, and said, "Tell me about your stories."

"That's not easy. Maybe I'll read one to you one day."

"Pour me a drink, darling. Then you can read me a story."

All writers want to read their work to someone. I poured her a drink and sat opposite her. Then I began to read.

The story was about two women, schoolteachers, who live together in a house. One of the women decides to marry. The other woman writes terrible things about her to other people in unsigned notes, and her future husband walks away from the marriage.

As I read, I looked at Holly. She didn't seem interested. She was playing with her cigarettes. She looked at her hands. What was she thinking about?

"Is that the end?" she asked, when I finished. "Of course, I like lesbians. I'm not scared of them. But I'm bored with stories about them. Your story is about lesbians, isn't it?"

I didn't answer. It was a mistake to read the story. I didn't want to have to explain it, too. She was stupid. A silly girl.

"Do you know any nice lesbians?" she asked. "I need someone to live with me. Lesbians are good home-makers. They love to do all the work around the house. I lived with a woman in Hollywood who acted in movies. She was better than a man in the house. People think I'm a lesbian, too. Of course I am, a little. Everyone is. But that's not a problem. Men like lesbians. The actress in Hollywood was married twice. Usually lesbians only marry once, to get a man's name. They want to be Mrs. because it sounds better than Miss."

Suddenly she stopped talking and opened her eyes very wide. Then she said, "That's not true!" She was looking at the clock on the table. "Is it really four-thirty?" she said.

Outside the window, it was already morning.

"What is today?" she asked.

"Thursday."

"Thursday" She stood up. "Oh, no." She sat down again. "That's terrible."

I was very tired. I sat on the bed and closed my eyes. "What's wrong with Thursdays?" I asked.

"Nothing, but I must catch the eight forty-five train. They're very careful about visiting hours. If you arrive at ten o'clock, you can spend an hour with the men before lunch. The poor men - they eat lunch at eleven! You can go at two but he likes a morning visit. I must stay awake. There isn't time to sleep. I want to be awake and healthy. A girl can't go to Sing Sing looking terrible."

"No," I said. I wasn't angry now because she interested me again.

"All the visitors dress well, and the women wear their prettiest clothes. Even the old women and the poor women look nice. I love the kids that come with the wives. You don't want to see kids there, but it isn't sad. They have clean hair and shiny shoes, and it's like a party in the visitors' room. In the movies prison is terrible, but Sing Sing is OK. There's a table between you and the prisoners. The kids stand on it and their fathers can hold them. The kids are always so happy to be there. It's different later when I see them on the train. They sit very quietly, looking at the river."

She looked at me. "I'm keeping you awake," she said. "Go to sleep."

"I'm interested."

"I know you are. But I mustn't tell you about Sally." She was quiet for a minute. Then she said, "But it is funny. You can write about it in a story if you use different names."

She took another apple. "Listen, Fred," she said. "Promise me you'll keep this story secret."

I promised.

"You probably know his name. He's often in the newspapers," she said.

"His name is Sally Tomato, and he's a darling old man. He's very serious about religion. Of course he was never my lover. I didn't know him until he was already in prison. But I love him now. I see him every Thursday. He pays me but I like to see him. This apple is bad," she said. She threw it out of the window. "I did see Sally sometimes in the past because he went to Joe Bell's bar, the one around the corner. He never talked to anybody but he was looking at me. Then he went to prison for five years. Joe Bell showed me his photo in the newspaper. Then I received a message from a lawyer. It said: 'Call me immediately. I have good news for you."

"You thought that somebody wanted to give you a million dollars?"

"No. I thought that somebody probably wanted money from me. But I went to see the lawyer. He says he's a lawyer. He doesn't have an office - just a telephone answering service. He always wants to meet in a cafe. He's fat - he can eat ten hamburgers in one meal. He offered me a hundred dollars a week to make a lonely old man happy. 'You've got the wrong Miss Golightly,' I told him. 'I don't sell myself to old men.' And a hundred dollars isn't a lot of money. Men give me fifty dollars when I go to the ladies' bathroom. And I always ask for money for a taxi, too - that's another fifty dollars. 'But the man is Sally Tomato,' he said. 'Old Sally has liked you for a long time. Be kind and visit him once a week.' What a romantic idea! So I agreed."

"It's a strange story," I said.

She smiled. "Do you think it's untrue?"

"Complete strangers can't visit prisoners."

"They don't know I'm a stranger. They think I'm his niece."

"And he gives you a hundred dollars for an hour's conversation?"

"He doesn't. The lawyer, Mr. O'Shaughnessy, mails it to me after I leave the weather report from Sally on his answering service."

"You're going to get into a lot of trouble," I said.

I switched off the light. We didn't need it now because it was morning. Birds were singing on the fire escape.

"Why?" she said seriously.

"You're not his niece. And what's this weather report?"

She gave a tired smile. "It's nothing. Sally tells me what to say. 'There are strong winds in Cuba' or 'It's snowing in Palermo'. Don't worry, darling," she said to me. "I can look after myself"

She moved to the bed and pulled the bed covers over my shoulders. Then she lay down next to me. "Is this OK?" she asked. "I only want to rest for a few minutes. Don't say another word. Go to sleep."

I didn't sleep. It was six o'clock when she put her hand softly on my arm. "Poor Fred," she said softly. She wasn't talking to me. "Where are you, Fred? I know it's cold. There's snow in the wind." She rested her head on my shoulder. Her face was warm and wet.

"Why are you crying?" I asked.

She moved away from me and sat up. "Oh," she said angrily. She ran toward the window and the fire escape. "I hate people who ask a lot of questions."

CHAPTER THREE

A Party at Holly's Apartment

The next day was Friday. I came home and found a large box of expensive food outside my door. Below it was a card: Miss Holiday Golightly, Traveling. Written on the back was:

Thank you, darling Fred. Please forgive last night. You were very kind. I won't wake you again - Holly.

I replied, Please do, and left my note at her door with some flowers. But she was serious. I didn't see her or hear from her. She had a new key for the front door. She didn't ring my bell and I missed her.

After a few days, I felt angry. I was lonely but I didn't want to see any of my old friends. They seemed so uninteresting now. By Wednesday I couldn't work.

I was thinking about Holly, Sing Sing, and Sally Tomato all the time. I was thinking about a world where men gave women fifty dollars for the bathroom. That night, I left a message in her mailbox: Tomorrow is Thursday. The next morning, there was a second note from her: Thank you for telling me. Can you come for a drink tonight at six o'clock?

I waited until ten minutes past six, and then I waited another five minutes.

A strange man opened the door. He smelled of cigarettes and soap. He was very small and he had a big head. There was no kindness in his eyes. Hair grew out of his ears and from his nose, and he had a gray beard.

"The kid's in the shower," he said. He pointed his cigarette toward the sound of water in another room.

We were standing because there were no seats in the room. Suitcases and unpacked boxes were the only furniture. The boxes were used as tables. On one table there were drinks, and on another table were a telephone, Holly's red cat, and some yellow roses. There were bookshelves on one wall, with a few books. I liked the room immediately. It had a careless look.

"Did she invite you?" the man asked. He looked at me carefully. "A lot of people come here when they're not invited. Have you known the kid for a long time?"

"No," I said. "I live upstairs."

My answer pleased him. "Is your apartment the same as this one?"

"It's much smaller."

"This place is a mess," he said. "Sometimes she has plenty of money but she still lives in a mess. So, what do you think? Is she or isn't she?"

"Isn't she what?'

"A fake."

"I don't think she is."

"You're wrong. She is a fake. But you're also right. She isn't a fake because she's a real fake. She believes all these things she believes. You can't change her. I've tried, the great Benny Polan tried. Benny wanted to marry her but she refused. Benny spent thousands of dollars sending her to head-doctors. There was one famous doctor, he only speaks German. He couldn't change her. But I like the kid. Not everybody likes her, but I do. I really like her because I'm romantic. Only romantic people understand her. But I'll tell you something. You can do everything for her and she'll give you nothing. One day she'll kill herself. Lots of girls kill themselves when they're not even crazy. And she is crazy!"

"But she's young," I said. "She has a future."

"You're wrong again. A year or two ago, in California, things were different. People were interested in her and she was near success. But if you walk out, you can't walk back. Holly wasn't famous, not before The Story of Dr. Wassell. Then she had a future. I know. I'm the guy who was helping her." He pointed his cigarette at himself. "O.J. Berman."

I didn't know his name. I smiled politely but I'd never heard of O.J. Berman, Hollywood actors' agent.

"I saw her first. She was living with a guy who rode in horse races. 'I'll tell the police if you don't leave her,' I told him. She was only fifteen years old. She was wearing thick glasses but she had a lot of style. She just arrived in town, came from nowhere. We gave her French lessons to make her speak better. People were interested in her, important people. Then Benny Polan, a good guy, wanted to marry her. What more can an agent ask for? Then The Story of Dr. Wassell. Did you see that movie? They wanted to give her a part as one of Dr. Wassell's nurses. Then I got the phone call." He held his hand to his ear. 'This is Holly,' she said. 'I'm in New York.'

'Why are you in New York?' I asked. 'It's Sunday and you have an interview for the movie tomorrow.' She said, 'I'm in New York because I've never been to New York before.'

'Get on a plane and come back here,' I told her. But she didn't want the movie. 'What do you want?'

I asked her. She said, 'When I find out, I'll tell you.' You see? She's crazy."

The red cat jumped off its box and walked up to him. He kicked it away with the toe of his shoe.

"Is this what she wants?" he said. "A lot of people that aren't invited? Living off money that men give her? Maybe she'll marry Rusty Trawler."

"Sorry, I don't know him."

"If you don't know Rusty Trawler, you don't know much about the kid."

He smiled. The smile made his face kinder. "I want to start again with Holly. As I told you," he said, "I really like the kid."

"What are you saying about me, O.J.?" Holly came into the room with a towel around her. Her feet were wet.

"That you're crazy."

"Fred knows that already. Light me a cigarette, darling," she said. She pulled off her shower hat and shook her hair. "Not you, O.J. You make the end wet."

She picked up the cat and put him on her shoulder.

"O.J. says bad things about me," she told me. I lit a cigarette and she took it. "But he does know a lot of famous people's phone numbers. What's David O. Selznick's number, O.J.? I want you to call him. Tell him about Fred. He's very smart and he writes wonderful stories. Don't be shy, Fred. O.J., darling, how will you make Fred rich?"

"I'll talk to Fred about that."

"Remember," she said, "I'm his agent. I'll call you to fasten my dress. And if anybody knocks at the door, let them in." Then she left us.

Many people knocked at the door. In the next fifteen minutes, a group of men filled the apartment. Some were soldiers. Most were too old to fight. They weren't friends. Each man was surprised when he saw the others. Were these all the men that she met in bars? But they soon started talking.

I stood alone by the bookshelves and looked at Holly's friends. One man was middle-aged but he had the face of a child. It was round and fat, and there were no lines around his eyes and mouth. He was at the center of the crowd. He poured drinks and introduced people. It was Holly's apartment, but his party. Maybe he was in love with her. But he didn't mind about the other men. He wasn't angry when she touched a soldier's arm.

The man's name was Rutherford ("Rusty") Trawler. When both his parents died in 1908, he was five years old. He immediately became a millionaire and his name was often in the newspapers. After four marriages and divorces, he was now an unmarried man again.

I read about him in a book on Holly's shelf. It was full of pieces cut from Sunday newspapers about Holly and Rusty. Holly walked up to me while I was reading one of them. It said: Miss Holiday Golightly, of the Boston Golightlys, makes every day a holiday for millionaire Rusty Trawler.

I said, "What was this week's weather report?"

She smiled but she wasn't amused. "Forget about Sally Tomato," she said. "Do you like O.J.? He can help you, Fred."

"You didn't like his help," I said.

"I don't understand."

"The Story of Dr. Wassell."

"Is he still talking about that movie?" She smiled across the room at Berman. "But he's right, I was a bad girl. I was playing at being an actress. I didn't want to be a movie star - it's too difficult. I'm too intelligent and I like myself too much. Movie stars don't like themselves. But one day I want to be rich and famous - that's part of my plan. I'll wake up one fine morning and have breakfast at Tiffany's. But I'll always be Holly Golightly. You need a drink," she said. "Rusty! Will you bring my friend a drink?"

She was still holding the cat. "Poor cat without a name," she said. "I can't give him a name because he doesn't belong to me. We met by the river one day and he came home with me. But he isn't mine. I don't want to own anything until I have the right place. I don't know where that place is. Tiffany's maybe." She smiled and dropped the cat on the floor. "Jewelry isn't important to me. Well, I do like expensive jewelry. But you can't wear the really expensive stones until you're forty. They only look good on old women. But I love Tiffany's for another reason. Listen. You know those days when you're really unhappy and afraid?"

"Days when you're sad?"

"No," she said slowly. "No, you can be sad because you're getting fat. Or maybe it's rained for a long time. But sometimes you feel worse. You're afraid and you don't know why. Something bad is going to happen... Do you get that feeling?"

"Quite often."

"What do you do about it?"

"A drink helps."

"I've tried that - and drugs - but they don't help. Only one thing works for me. I get into a taxi and go to Tiffany's. It calms me because it's so quiet. Nothing very bad will happen to you there, not with those kind men in their nice suits, and those wonderful, expensive smells. I want a place where I feel as good as in Tiffany's. Then I'll buy some furniture and give the cat a name. Maybe after the war, Fred and I -"

She lifted her dark glasses. "I went to Mexico. It's a wonderful country for horses. I saw one house near the ocean. Fred's good with horses."

Rusty Trawler brought me a drink. "I'm hungry," he said. "It's seven-thirty and I'm hungry. You know what the doctor says."

"Yes, Rusty. I know what the doctor says."

"So let's stop the party. Let's go."

"Be a good boy, Rusty." She spoke softly, but her voice was angry.

"You don't love me," he said.

"Nobody loves a bad boy."

Her words seemed to excite him. This was a game that they played. He continued, "Do you love me?"

She touched his hand. "Look after the guests, Rusty. And when I'm ready, we'll eat."

"Chinese food?"

"Maybe. But not too much of it. Remember what the doctor says."

He returned to the party. There was a happy smile on his face.

"Do you love him?" I asked.

"You can love anybody if you really try. And he was very unhappy when he was a child."

"He is a child. That's how he acts."

"He feels safer. He really wants to be a girl but he can't think like that. 'Grow up and make a home with a nice, fatherly truck driver,' I told him. But he got angry and tried to knife me. He's OK. He won't really hurt me."

"Thank God you're not going to marry Mr. Trawler."

"He's rich. Land in Mexico costs money. Now, let's find O.J."

Before we moved, I asked her another question. "Why does it say Traveling on your card?"

"I don't know where I'll be tomorrow. So I told them to put Traveling. I didn't need those cards but I wanted to buy something. They're from Tiffany's." She took my hand. "Come with me. You're going to make friends with O.J." Suddenly the door opened and a young woman hurried in. "H-H-Holly!" she said. "You are so selfish. You kept all these wonderful men for yourself!" She was more than six feet tall, taller than most of the men in the room. Holly said angrily, "What are you doing here?"

"N-n-nothing, darling. I was upstairs with Yunioshi. We're taking photos for a Christmas magazine. Are you angry, darling?" She smiled at the men in the room. "You b-b-boys aren't angry with me because I've come to the party?"

Rusty Trawler laughed quietly. "Do you want a drink?" he asked.

"Yes, please," she said.

"There isn't any," Holly told her. "It's finished."

"Oh, that's OK. Don't worry about me, Holly, darling," she said. "I can introduce myself." She looked down at O.J. Berman. "I'm Mag W-w-wildwood, from Wild-w-w-wood, Arkansas. That's in the mountains."

The men moved around her. They liked her silly jokes. She wasn't beautiful but she looked interesting. She was very tall and had a flat chest. Her hair was pulled straight back, making her thin face thinner. Even her unusual speech made her silly words sound interesting. Men wanted to protect her. Here's an example. She said, "Who can tell me w-w-where the b-b-bathroom is?"

Berman ran over to her. He offered his arm to guide her there himself.

"That isn't necessary," said Holly. "She's visited me before. She knows where the bathroom is."

After Mag Wildwood left the room, she continued. "It's really very sad." She waited until the men were listening to her. "And so mysterious. She looks healthy. She looks so clean. That's the strange thing. Don't you think she looks clean?"

Someone coughed. An officer was holding Mag Wildwood's drink. He put it down.

"But many of these Southern girls have the same trouble," said Holly. She shook her head sadly and went to the kitchen for more ice.

When Mag Wildwood returned, she couldn't understand the change in the room. Nobody wanted to talk to her. Men were leaving without taking her telephone number. She became very angry with everyone. She shouted at Holly. Then she invited a man in his fifties to fight. She pushed Rusty Trawler into a corner. "Do you know what's going to happen to you?" she

said, and her speech problem disappeared. "I'm going to feed you to the animals in Central Park."

He looked excited at the thought, but she suddenly sat down on the floor.

"You're very boring. Get up from there," Holly said. The men were waiting at the door and she was putting on her coat. When Mag Wildwood didn't move, Holly looked at me. "Be a darling, Fred. Put her in a taxi. She lives at the Winslow Hotel."

Then they were gone. I looked at Mag. She was a big woman, too big to carry down to a taxi. But she suddenly stood up. She said, "Let's go to the Stork Nightclub." Then she fell down onto the floor. Was she sick? Did she need a doctor? But she wasn't sick - she was asleep. I left her to enjoy her rest.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Conversation about Men

The next afternoon I met Holly on the stairs. "You," she said, hurrying past with a package from the drugstore. "You left her there to die from the cold! And now she's really unhappy."

I realized from her words that Mag Wildwood was still in the apartment.

But Holly didn't stop to talk. Suddenly she was worried about Mag - but the night before she hated her. I didn't understand.

During the weekend, there was a bigger mystery. First, a Spanish or Italian man came to my door and asked for Miss Wildwood. Our conversation was difficult because he didn't understand my English. But I liked him. His brown face was handsome and he wore an expensive suit.

Toward evening, I saw him again. I was going out to dinner and he was arriving in a taxi. The driver helped him carry a lot of suitcases into the house. That gave me something to think about.

Sunday was a warm, late summer day. The sun was strong and my window was open. I heard voices on the fire escape. Holly and Mag were lying there, with the cat between them. Mag was making a woollen sweater.

"I think you're l-l-lucky," she said to Holly. "There's one good thing you can say about Rusty. He's an American."

"Why is that important?"

"Darling. We're in the middle of a war."

"And when it ends, you won't see me again. I'll leave the country. I'm going to travel the world."

"I don't feel that way. I'm p-p-proud of my country. The men in my family were great soldiers. There's a big statue of Grandfather Wildwood in the center of Wildwood."

"Fred's a soldier," said Holly. "But there'll never be a statue of him. I don't think he's a great soldier. But maybe he is. Brave people are usually stupid and he's quite stupid."

"Is Fred that boy upstairs? Is he a soldier? He does look stupid."

"He's not stupid. And he's a different Fred. Fred's my brother."

"You call your own b-b-brother stupid?"

"He is stupid."

"Don't say that! That boy is fighting for you and me and all of us."

"What is this: a speech for the government?"

"I want you to understand. I like a joke, but I'm a really s-s-serious person. I'm proud to be an American. That's why I'm sorry about Jose. He's very handsome, isn't he?"

Holly agreed and started playing with the cat.

"But I can't imagine m-m-marrying a Brazilian. And being a B-b-brazilian myself. It's a long way from here. Six thousand miles, and I don't know the language -"

"Go to a language school."

"Do they teach P-p-portuguese? Do people really speak Portuguese? No, Jose must stop working for the Brazilian government. He must become an American. Why does he want to be the p-p-president of Brazil. That's a crazy idea." She was quiet for a minute, then she spoke again. "I'm really in love. You saw us together. Do you think I'm really in love?"

"Does he bite?"

"Bite?"

"Bite you. When you're in bed."

"No. Is that important?" Then she continued, "But he does laugh."

"That's good. I like a man who laughs in bed. Most of them just make strange noises. OK. He doesn't bite in bed but he laughs. And -?"

Mag didn't answer.

"I said -"

"I heard you. And I want to tell you. But it's difficult to remember. I d-d-don't think about these things much. About sex and men. You do but I don't. They go out of my head like a dream. Most people don't talk about sex, Holly. I'm a very-very-very ordinary person."

"It's natural to think about sex. And to look at men. What's wrong with looking at a guy's body? A lot of men are beautiful. Jose is beautiful, but you don't even look at him in bed. So you're not in love with him."

"L-l-lower your voice."

"You're not in love with him," Holly repeated.

"I'm a loving person. I have a loving heart."

"OK. You have a loving heart. But that doesn't keep a man warm in bed."

"Jose isn't unhappy," Mag said. "And I am in love with him. I make winter sweaters and socks for him. I've made ten pairs of socks in three months. And this is the second sweater."

She put down the sweater. "But why am I doing this? Sweaters in Brazil! I should make s-s-sun hats."

Holly lay back. "Surely they have a winter."

"I know that it rains. Heat. Rain. T-t-t-trees."

"Heat. Trees. It sounds good to me."

"Better for you than for me."

"Yes," said Holly, sounding sleepy. "Better for me than for you."

On Monday, when I went down for the morning mail, there was a new name on the card on Holly's mailbox. Miss Golightly and Miss Wildwood were now traveling together.

I wasn't very interested because there was a letter in my own mailbox. It was from a small college magazine. They liked one of my stories. They couldn't pay me but that wasn't important. They wanted to print the story. Print the story in a magazine! I was so excited. I wanted to tell someone. Running up the stairs, I knocked loudly on Holly's door.

I couldn't speak when she opened the door. Her eyes were half-closed with sleep. I gave her the letter and she read it slowly. Then she gave it back to me.

"Don't let them use your story. Not until they pay for it," she said.

I looked at her angrily. I didn't want her opinions. I wanted her to be happy for me.

She smiled. "Oh, I understand. It's wonderful. Come in," she said. "We'll make some coffee and have a party. No. I'll get dressed and take you to lunch."

Her bedroom was in the same state as the other rooms in the apartment. There were a lot of boxes and suitcases. All her things were packed. She was ready to leave. This room did have a piece of furniture, though - a double bed made of light wood, with a shiny cover.

She left the door of the bathroom open. As she washed, she talked to me.

"You know that Mag Wildwood has moved in? Isn't that good? She's not a lesbian, but she's stupid. That's almost as good as a lesbian. A stupid person will pay for the apartment and take my clothes to the cleaner's."

She came out of the bathroom. "And she's quite a successful actress. Isn't that great? She'll be out of the apartment for most of the day. And there won't be too much trouble with men because she's getting married. He's a nice guy, too. But he's a little smaller than her - about a foot smaller. Now where -?"

She was on her knees looking under the bed. She found her shoes, then she searched for a shirt and a belt. The room was a mess but Holly was perfect.

"Listen," she said, and put her hand on my face. "I'm happy about the story. I really am."

That was a beautiful Monday in October 1943. We started with drinks at Joe Bell's bar. When he heard of my good luck, he refused to take our money. Later, we walked toward Fifth Avenue, and watched the soldiers. They were playing music, not for the war but for me.

We ate lunch at the cafe in the park. Then we laughed and ran and sang along the paths toward the old wooden boathouse. It's not there now. An old man was sweeping up trash and putting it on a fire. The smoke made the only dark cloud in the sky. It was the end of the year but to me this was the start of something.

I sat with Holly near the boathouse. I thought of the future and spoke of the past.

"When you were a child, was life good?" Holly asked.

She listened to my stories about my life before New York. Then she told me about her life but the telling was strange. She didn't name places or people. "I had pretty cousins and we had lots of parties," she said. "We went swimming in the summer. I was very happy."

"But you ran away from home when you were fourteen," I said.

"That's true. The rest of my story was a lie. But really, darling, your story was so sad. I didn't want my story to be sad, too."

She stood up. "I've remembered something. I must send a gift to Fred."

That afternoon we walked around New York, looking for gifts for Fred. She wanted food for him. "He's a big, tall guy and he loves to eat," she said.

It was dark when we came out of the last grocer's store. We were near the store with the bird cage in its window, so I showed it to her. She liked it.

"It's beautiful," she said. "But it is a cage. Nothing can be free inside there."

We were near a larger store and she took my arm. "Let's steal something," she said, and she pulled me inside.

I was scared because people were watching us. Holly laughed and stole something small. Then she took my hand and we walked away. It was as simple as that. Outside, we ran for a few blocks because we were so excited.

"Have you often stolen things?" I asked.

"I had to when I was younger," she said. "I steal sometimes now - it's good practice. One day I may need to do it again."

I have a memory of spending many days like that with Holly. Sometimes we did spend a lot of time together but in reality the memory is a lie. Toward the end of the month, I found a job. It was necessary and I worked from nine o'clock in the morning to five in the evening.

My hours were very different to Holly's. When I came home from work, Holly was getting out of bed, except on Thursday, her Sing Sing day. She also got up early in the day when she went horse riding.

Sometimes, I stopped at her apartment for a cup of coffee. She was always going out, usually with Rusty Trawler, Mag Wildwood, and the

handsome Brazilian. His name was Jose Ybarra-Jaegar because his mother was German. They were a strange group. Ybarra-Jaegar was different to Holly, Rusty, and Mag. He was intelligent, well - dressed, and serious about his work. He was something important in the government and went to Washington three or four days a week. Did he enjoy these nights? Night after night in clubs - La Rue or El Morocco - listening to Mag t-t-t-talk and looking at Rusty's baby-face?

He was a foreigner, I thought. He didn't understand Americans. To him, we were all the same. He didn't realize that people were different - some good and some bad. He thought we were all interesting and fun to be with. And, I thought, Holly wanted him.

That explains some of what happened next.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Gift from Tiffany's

Late one afternoon, I was waiting for a bus on Fifth Avenue when I saw a taxi stop across the street. A girl got out and ran up the steps of the library, through the doors of the building. Suddenly I realized it was Holly. I was surprised because the idea of Holly in a library was very strange.

I followed her inside the building. She went into the reading room, where she sat at a desk in front of a pile of books. She was wearing her dark glasses. She turned quickly from one book to the next, sometimes reading a page more carefully. She held a pencil above a piece of paper but didn't write much. When she did write, her pencil moved slowly.

I remembered a girl from school, Mildred Grossman. Mildred was a serious girl with thin, straight hair and dirty glasses. She never dreamed of a more exciting life. Mildred and Holly were very different but in my mind they were similar. Most people change every few years; their ideas and even their bodies change. But these were two people who could never change. For this reason I looked at Holly Golightly and thought about Mildred Grossman.

I imagined them in a restaurant in the future. Mildred will read the menu carefully. Then she'll ask the waiter, "Is this food healthy? Is it good for me?" Holly will want to try everything on the menu.

It was after seven o'clock. Holly put on more lipstick and some jewelry. She was preparing to go to a night club. When she left the library, I walked over to her table. Her books were there; they were all books about Brazil.

The night before Christmas, Holly and Mag gave a party.

I arrived early. "Look in the bedroom. There's a gift for you," Holly said.

I had a gift for her, too. There was a small package in my pocket.

On the bed I saw the beautiful bird cage.

"But, Holly! That's terrible!" I said.

"I agree. But you liked it."

"The money! It cost three hundred and fifty dollars!"

She laughed. "It cost a few trips to the bathroom. Promise me, though. Promise you'll never put a living thing inside it."

I started to kiss her but she held out her hand. "Give me that," she said, touching the package in my pocket.

"It isn't much," I said. It was a very small piece of jewelry - but it came from Tiffany's.

Holly couldn't keep anything. I'm sure she has lost that piece of jewelry by now. She's probably left it in a suitcase or a hotel closet. But I still have the bird cage. I've carried it to New Orleans, Nantucket, Europe, Morocco, the West Indies. But I often forget that Holly gave it to me. One day, we had a fight. We fought about the bird cage, and about O.J. Berman. And we fought about my story, when it was printed in the college magazine.

In February, Holly went on a winter trip with Rusty, Mag, and Jose Ybarra-Jaegar. Our fight happened soon after she returned. Her skin was very brown and her hair was almost white from the sun.

"I've had a wonderful time," she told me. "First we were in Key West, Florida, and Rusty was angry with some sailors. Or maybe the sailors were angry with him. He went to hospital and now he'll have a bad back for the rest of his life. Dear Mag went to the hospital, too - she was badly burned by the sun. She looked terrible and the doctors put something on her skin. We hated the smell of her. So Jose and I left them in the hospital and went to Havana.

He says I'll love Rio more. But Havana is wonderful. Then we went back to Key West. Mag was sure I was sleeping with Jose. Rusty was, too, but it didn't matter to him. Mag was very unfriendly until I had a long talk with her."

It was March and we were in the living room in Holly's apartment. There was a new piece of furniture: a small bed. Holly was lying on it under a sun lamp.

"And she believed you?"

"That I didn't sleep with Jose? Yes. 'I'm a lesbian,' I told her. 'I don't sleep with men.'"

"She didn't believe that!"

"She did. That's why she bought this bed. You know me - I can always tell a good story. Darling, put some oil on my back."

I put the oil on her skin. Then she said, "O.J. Berman's in New York. Listen, I gave him your story in the magazine. He liked it. He wants to help you. But you're writing about the wrong subjects. Blacks and children: who's interested in them?"

"Mr. Berman isn't?"

"I agree with him. I read that story twice. Kids and Blacks. Lots of descriptions. The story doesn't mean anything."

I was still putting the oil on her skin. Suddenly I was very angry. I wanted to hit her. "Give me an example," I said quietly, "of a story that means something. In your opinion."

"Wuthering Heights," she said, immediately.

That made me more angry. "You can't compare my story with Wuthering Heights. That's one of the greatest books in the world!"

"It is, isn't it? My wild sweet Cathy. I cried millions of tears. I saw it ten times."

"Oh," I said. "The movie"

She lifted her head and looked at me. Her eyes were cold and angry. "You think you're better than I am," she said.

"I don't compare myself to you. Or Berman. So I'm not better than you. But we want different things."

"Don't you want to make money?"

"I don't think about the future," I said.

"That's how your stories sound. You write them without knowing the end. But I tell you: you need money. You like expensive things. Not many people are going to buy you bird cages."

"Sorry."

"You will be sorry if you hit me. You wanted to a minute ago. I felt it in your hand. You want to hit me now."

Yes, I did. My hand and my heart were shaking as I put the top on the bottle of oil.

"I'm sorry you spent your money on me," I said. "You worked hard to earn it."

"What do you mean?" she asked, quietly.

"Spending time with Rusty Trawler," I said. "That's a hard way to earn money."

She sat up on the bed. Her face and her shoulders were blue in the light from the sun lamp. "It takes about four seconds to walk from here to the door," she said. "You have two seconds to get out."

I went upstairs and picked up the bird cage. I took it down and left it in front of her door. That, I thought, was the end of that. But the next morning, when I was going to work, I saw the cage on the sidewalk with the trash.

I picked it up and carried it back to my room. It was too beautiful to throw away. But Holly Golightly was out of my life. She wasn't important. I didn't need to speak to her again.

And I didn't speak to her again for a long time. I passed her on the stairs but I didn't look at her. If she walked into Joe Bell's bar, I walked out.

One day Mrs. Sapphia Spanella, the tenant on the first floor, sent a letter to the other tenants. "Miss Golightly must leave this building," the letter said. "She has late-night parties and brings strangers into the house. We are not safe while she is living here. Please sign this letter and I will send it to the owner of the building."

I refused to sign but secretly I agreed with Mrs. Spanella. But her letter failed. In early May, the open-windowed, warm spring nights were noisy with the sound of parties from Apartment 2.

CHAPTER SIX

A Visitor from Holly's Past

It wasn't unusual for strange people to come to Holly's door. One day late that spring, when I walked into the building, I saw a very strange man. He was looking at her mailbox.

He was about fifty years old, with a tired face and sad gray eyes. He wore an old gray hat and his cheap summer suit was too big for him. His shoes were brown and new. He didn't ring Holly's doorbell. Slowly, he touched the letters of her name on her card.

That evening, on my way to supper, I saw the man again. He was standing across the street, under a tree, looking up at Holly's windows. What did he want? Was he a detective? Or someone sent by her Sing Sing friend, Sally Tomato?

Suddenly I felt sorry for Holly. We were enemies but I wanted to help her. As I walked to the corner, the man looked at me. Then he started to follow me. He was singing quietly - Holly's song: "I don't want to sleep, I don't want to die. I just want to travel through the sky."

I waited for a traffic light to change. I looked at him out of the corner of my eye as he spoke to a dog-owner. "You have a fine animal," he said. His voice was low and he came from the hill-country.

The hamburger restaurant was empty but he sat next to me at the bar. He smelled of cigarettes. He ordered a cup of coffee but didn't drink it. He looked at me in the mirror on the wall opposite us.

"Excuse me," I said. I looked at him in the mirror, too. "What do you want?" The question didn't make him nervous. "I need a friend," he said.

He pulled an old wallet from his pocket and took out a photo. There were seven people in the picture, in front of a wooden house. They were all children, except for the man. He had his arm around the waist of a pretty little girl.

"That's me," he said, pointing at himself. "That's her..." He pointed at the girl. "And this one here," he added, "is her brother, Fred."

I looked at "her" again. Yes, now I could see that the child was Holly.

"You're Holly's father!'

"Her name isn't Holly," he said. "She was Lulamae Barnes until she married me. I'm her husband, Doc Golightly. Call me Doc. I'm a horse doctor. I do some farming, too, near Tulip, in Texas. Why are you laughing?"

I wasn't really laughing. I was nervous. I drank some water and it went down the wrong way. He hit me on the back. "This isn't funny. I'm a tired man. I've looked for my woman for five years. Then I got Fred's letter. 'She's in New York,' he wrote. I bought a bus ticket and came to the city. I want Lulamae at home, with her husband and her children."

"Children?"

"Those are her children," he almost shouted. He pointed at the four other young faces in the picture - two girls and two boys.

Of course, the man was crazy. "Holly can't be their mother. Those children are older and bigger than she is."

"Listen," he said calmly. "I'm not saying they're her natural children. Their own dear mother, a good woman, died on the fourth of July, 1936. I married Lulamae in December, 1938, when she was almost fourteen years old. Maybe an ordinary person of fourteen doesn't know what she wants. But Lulamae isn't an ordinary person. 'I know what I want,' she said to me. 'I want to be your wife and the mother of your children.' She broke our hearts when she ran away."

He drank his cold coffee and looked at me carefully. "Do you believe me?" Yes, I believed him. His story was so strange, it had to be true. And it was like O.J. Berman's description of Holly in her first days in California.

"She broke our hearts when she ran away," the horse doctor repeated. "She had no reason to go. Her daughters did all the housework. We had our own farm, chickens and pigs. She got fat and her brother grew really tall. They didn't come to us like that. Nellie, my oldest girl, brought them into the house. She came to me one morning. 'Dad,' she said, 'I've locked two wild children in the kitchen. They were outside stealing milk and eggs.' That was Lulamae and Fred. They were very thin and their teeth were falling out. Their mother and their father got sick and died. All the children were sent to live with different people. Lulamae and her brother lived with some terrible people, a hundred miles east of Tulip. She had a good reason to run away from their house. But she didn't have a reason to leave my house. It was her home."

He put his hands over his eyes. "She grew into a really pretty woman. She was fun, too. She talked a lot. She had an opinion about everything. I picked flowers for her. I found a bird for her and taught it to say her name. I taught her to play the guitar. One night I asked her to marry me. I was crying. 'Why are you crying, Doc?' she asked me. 'Of course I'll marry you. I've never been married before.' I had to laugh. I've never been married before."

He laughed quietly. "That woman was happy!" he said. "We all loved her. She didn't do anything except eat and wash her hair. And send away for magazines. We spent a hundred dollars on magazines. That was the problem. She read those magazines and they gave her dreams about a different life. Then she started walking down the road from the farm. Every day she walked a little more. First she walked a mile and came home. Then she went two miles and came home. One day she didn't stop walking."

He put his hands over his eyes again. "The bird went wild and flew away. All summer you could hear him. In the yard. In the woods. All summer that bird was calling: 'Lulamae, Lulamae.'"

Then he stopped talking. I paid our checks and we left the cafe together.

It was a cold, windy evening. We were both quiet. Then I said, "But what happened to her brother? Didn't he leave?"

"No, sir," he said. "Fred stayed with us until he became a soldier. He's a good boy, good with horses. He didn't understand Lulamae. 'Why has she left her brother and husband and children?' he asked. After he left the farm, he had some letters from her. He sent me her address. So I've come to get her. I know she's sorry. I know she wants to go home."

He wanted me to agree with him.

"I think you'll find that Holly or Lulamae - has changed," I said.

"Listen," he said, when we reached my apartment building. "I need a friend. I don't want to surprise her or scare her. Be my friend. Tell her I'm here."

I liked the idea of introducing Mrs. Golightly to her husband. I looked up at her lighted windows. I hoped her friends were there. I wanted to see Doc Golightly shake hands with Mag and Rusty and Jose. But then I looked at Doc Golightly's proud, serious eyes and I felt bad.

He followed me into the house and waited at the bottom of the stairs. "Do I look nice?" he asked quietly.

Holly was alone. She answered the door immediately. She was ready to go out. "Hello, you silly man," she said. She hit my arm playfully with her purse. "I'm in a hurry so we can't make friends now. Tomorrow, OK?"

"OK, Lulamae. But will you be here tomorrow?"

She took off her dark glasses and looked closely at me. "He told you that," she said in a small, nervous voice. "Oh, please. Where is he?"

She ran past me into the hall. "Fred!" she called down the stairs. "Fred! Where are you, darling?"

I heard Doc Golightly climbing the stairs. Holly saw him and stopped. She wasn't scared but suddenly she was very sad. Then he was standing shyly

in front of her.

"Hello, Lulamae," he began. "Don't they feed you up here? You're so thin - like when I first saw you."

Holly touched his face. "Hello, Doc," she said softly and kissed him. "Hello, Doc," she repeated happily. He lifted her off her feet and started to laugh. Neither of them saw me when I went up to my room. They didn't seem to notice Mrs. Sapphia Spanella when she opened her door. "Be quiet!" she shouted. "Take your men away from this house!"

"Divorce him? Of course I never divorced him. I was only fourteen!" Holly lifted her empty glass. "Two more drinks, my darling Mr. Bell."

We were in Joe Bell's bar. "It's early in the day for drinking," he said. The clock behind the bar showed that it was not yet noon. We were already on our fourth drink.

"But it's Sunday, Mr. Bell. The clocks are slow on Sundays. And I haven't been to bed yet," she told him. "Not to sleep," she said quietly to me. She went red and turned away.

For the first time, she seemed to feel a need to explain her actions to me.

"I had to. Doc really loves me, you know. And I love him. He may look old to you but you don't know him. He's a kind man, he loves birds and children. He gave me a lot. Every night I ask God to watch over him. Stop smiling!" she said angrily. "I do love him."

"You're a very special person," I said.

"Yes, I am," she said. Her face, pale in the morning light, brightened. She smoothed her hair. "I look terrible. We spent the night in a bus station. Doc wanted me to go with him. I told him, 'Doc, I'm not fourteen and I'm not Lulamae.' But you know what's sad? I am the same person. I'm still stealing eggs and running through the trees."

Joe Bell put the fresh drinks in front of us.

"Never love a wild thing, Mr. Bell," Holly told him. "That was Doc's mistake. He was always bringing home wild things. Once it was a sick bird, then a wild cat with a broken leg. But you can't give your heart to a wild thing. If you give them your heart, they get stronger. Then one day they are so strong that they run into the woods. Or fly into a tree. Then a taller tree. Then the sky. If you love a wild thing too much, they run away."

"She's drunk," Joe Bell told me.

"A little," Holly said. "But Doc understood. I explained it to him very carefully. We shook hands and he held me. He wants me to be happy."

"What's she talking about?" Joe Bell asked me.

Holly lifted her glass and touched it against mine. "Good luck, Doc. Dearest Doc - it's good to look at the sky. But you don't want to live there. It's a very empty place."

CHAPTER SEVEN

A Death in the Family

RUSTY TRAWLER MARRIES FIFTH WIFE.

I was on a subway train when I saw those words in another passenger's newspaper. I read: Millionaire Rutherford ("Rusty") Trawler yesterday married a beautiful –

I didn't want to read any more. So Holly was married to him. I wanted to be under the wheels of the train.

The few weeks after our Sunday at Joe Bell's bar were difficult. First, I lost my job because of a silly mistake. I was scared. I didn't want to leave New York but could I stay there without work? And there was still a war in Europe. I was the right age but I really didn't want to be a soldier.

That day I was on a subway because I was looking for another job. I was returning from an interview with a newspaper. It was summer and the city was hot. I felt tired and nervous and unhappy. So yes, part of me already wanted to be under the wheels of the train. Then I saw the newspaper. Holly was married to that stupid man. The world was going crazy.

Was I angry because I was in love with Holly? Maybe. I was in love with her. I loved Holly in the same way that I loved my mother's old cook, and the mailman, and the McKendrick family in my home town. She was an important part of my life. I didn't want to lose her friendship.

When I arrived at the station, I bought a newspaper. I read the end of the sentence and discovered the name of Rusty's new wife... a beautiful girl

from the Arkansas hills, Miss Margaret Thatcher Fitzhue Wildwood. Mag! My legs started to shake and I took a taxi home.

Mrs. Sapphia Spanella met me in the hall. Her eyes were wild. "Run!" she said. "Bring the police. She is killing somebody! Somebody is killing her!"

There was a lot of noise in Holly's apartment. Breaking glass, furniture falling over. But strangely, there were no angry voices.

"Run!" shouted Mrs. Spanella, pushing me. "Tell the police there is a murder!"

I ran, but only upstairs to Holly's door. I knocked on it loudly and the noise inside stopped. But she didn't let me into the apartment. I tried to break down the door but only hurt my shoulder. Then below me I heard Mrs. Spanella giving orders to another man. "Get the police!" she said.

"Be quiet," the man told her. "And move away from me."

It was Jose Ybarra-Jaegar. He didn't look like a smart Brazilian government employee now. He was nervous and scared.

"Move out of my way," he ordered me. Using his own key, he opened the door. "Come in here, Dr. Goldman," he said to the man who was with him.

I followed them into the apartment. It was a terrible mess. The lamps were broken and there were books and records on the floor. In the middle of the room, Holly's cat was calmly drinking milk from a broken bottle.

In the bedroom, I stepped on Holly's dark glasses. They were lying on the floor, already broken into two pieces.

Holly lay on the bed. She didn't move or say anything. The doctor took her hand. "You're a tired young lady. Very tired. You want to go to sleep, don't you? Sleep."

Holly touched her face, leaving blood on it from a cut finger. "Sleep," she said. Her voice was tired and childish. "I can sleep when he's there... I hold him on cold nights... I saw a place in Mexico... With horses. Near the ocean."

"With horses near the ocean," repeated the doctor softly. He took something from his black case.

Jose looked at the doctor. "Is she sad?" he asked. "Is she sick only because she's sad?"

"That didn't hurt, did it?" asked the doctor. He touched Holly's arm with a small piece of cotton.

She turned to the doctor. "Everything hurts. Where are my glasses?" But she didn't need them. Her eyes were already closing.

"She is only sad?" Jose asked again.

"Please, sir," the doctor said angrily. "Leave me alone with the patient."

Jose went back to the living room. Then he shouted at Mrs. Spanella and pushed her out of the apartment.

"Don't touch me! I'll call the police," she said.

At first he wanted to throw me out of the apartment, too. Then suddenly he invited me to have a drink.

"I am worried," he told me. "The newspaper reporters will write about this. Breaking up the apartment. Acting like a crazy woman. My work is important. I don't want my name in the newspapers."

"This is her apartment. It's a private place," I said. "There's no reason for the newspapers to write about it."

"It's only because she's sad," he said. "First she threw her glass, then the bottle. Those books. A lamp. Then I was scared. I hurried out and brought

the doctor."

"But why?" I wanted to know. "Why is she so unhappy about Rusty?"

"Rusty?" he asked.

I was still carrying my newspaper and showed it to him.

"Oh, that." He smiled. "They're not important. We laughed at Rusty and Mag. We weren't unhappy. It was good for us. We wanted them to run away. I promise you, we were laughing. Then the sad news came."

His eyes searched the mess on the floor and he picked up a ball of yellow paper. "This," he said.

It was a message from Tulip, Texas:

I received a letter about young Fred. He was killed while he was fighting in Europe. Your husband and children are very sorry. Letter follows.

Love Doc.

Holly only spoke about her brother once after that day. And she stopped calling me Fred. All through the warm summer months of June and July, she stayed at home. Her hair darkened and she grew fatter. She became careless about her clothes. Once, she ran to the food store wearing a raincoat and nothing under it.

Jose moved into the apartment and his name took the place of Mag Wildwood's on the mailbox. Holly was alone for a lot of the time because Jose stayed in Washington three days a week. When he was away, she didn't see anyone. She only left the apartment on Thursdays, when she made her weekly trip to Sing Sing.

She seemed happier. But she was also acting very strangely.

Suddenly she wanted to make her apartment into a home. She bought pictures and furniture. She bought a lot of books and records. She bought a statue of a Chinese cat. Her cat hated the statue and broke it. She bought mixing bowls and cook books and a stove. She spent afternoons in the small kitchen.

"Jose says that I'm a great cook. I'm smart, aren't I? A month ago, I couldn't boil an egg."

She still couldn't boil eggs. Simple dishes - steak, a salad - were too difficult for her. She fed Jose (and sometimes me) strange soups, meat cooked with fruit, chicken and rice with chocolate.

"It's a special meal from eastern India, darling," she told me.

She started to learn Portuguese. She played the same language records again and again, until we were both bored.

She started almost every sentence with: "After we're married..." Sometimes she said, "When we move to Rio..." But Jose never suggested marriage.

"But he will, darling. He knows I'm having a baby. Well, I am, darling. Why are you surprised? I'm not surprised, I'm very happy. I want to have nine children. Some of them will be dark-skinned like Jose. There's some black blood in him. But you knew that. That's OK - a dark-skinned baby with bright green eyes will be beautiful. I'm sad because he wasn't my first lover. I haven't had a lot of lovers - only eleven. I don't count the men before I was thirteen. They weren't important. People think I've had a lot more lovers. Eleven. Does that make me a prostitute? Think of Mag Wildwood. Or Honey Tucker. Or Rose Ellen Ward. They've had a lot more lovers. Of course, I don't have a problem with prostitutes. Some of them can be good friends - but they all tell lies. Think about it. You have sex with a guy and take his checks. Then you tell yourself that you love him. I always try to love them a little. Even Benny Shacklett and all those terrible men. Except for Doc, Jose is my first real love. Oh, he's not perfect. He tells lies sometimes. He worries about what people think. He takes fifty baths a day. He's too careful to be my perfect guy. He always turns away from me when he undresses. He makes too

much noise when he eats. But I do love Jose. I'll stop smoking if he asks me. He's friendly. I laugh when I'm with him. I don't get unhappy now, not often. And I'm only a little unhappy. I'm not so unhappy that I go to Tiffany's. I take Jose's suit to the cleaner's, or cook him a meal, and I'm fine. And another thing - I don't worry about the future. Good things only happen to you if you're honest. I sometimes break the law but I'm honest to myself. I don't tell myself lies. It's better to have a terrible painful sickness than a dishonest heart. Oh, forget it! Pass me my guitar and I'll sing you a song in my perfect Portuguese."

CHAPTER EIGHT

The End of the Summer

I can't clearly remember those final weeks of summer and the beginning of another winter. We didn't talk a lot. I understood her and she understood me. We didn't need words. We were happy to be together, sometimes in silence.

Often, he was out of town. I didn't like him, so I didn't use his name. Then Holly and I spent evenings together and we didn't say more than a hundred words. One night we walked all the way to Chinatown, for Chinese food, then we went across the Brooklyn Bridge. We looked at the ships moving toward the ocean. Holly said, "In a few years, one of those ships will bring me back - me and my nine Brazilian kids. Because they must see this, these lights, the river. I love New York. But it's not my city, I don't belong here."

And I said, "Please be quiet." Her words made me unhappy. She was leaving me. She was a big ship, sailing away to a wonderful new place. I was a little boat that had to stay here, on dry land next to the river.

I don't remember those last days clearly. One day followed another and they were all the same. Then something happened. There was a day that was very different. It was a day that I will always remember. On that day, Holly saved my life.

It was the 30th of September, my birthday. I was downstairs in the hall, waiting for the mailman's morning visit. I hoped for a gift of some money from my family.

Because I was in the hall, I saw Holly.

"Darling!" she said. "Get your coat. Let's ride horses around the park."

She was wearing a jacket and blue jeans. She pointed at her flat stomach.

"I'm not going to fall and lose the baby. But there's a special horse, my darling old Mabel Minerva. I can't leave New York without saying goodbye to Mabel Minerva."

"Goodbye?" I repeated.

"We're leaving next Saturday. Jose bought the tickets." I followed her down to the street. "We change airplanes in Miami. Then we fly over the ocean and over the Andes. Taxi!"

Over the Andes. We traveled in a taxi across Central Park. I imagined that I was flying over the lonely, snow-covered, dangerous mountains.

"But you can't," I said. "You can't really run away and leave everybody."

"I don't think anyone will miss me. I have no friends."

"I'll miss you. Joe Bell will, too. And oh - millions of people. Sally. Poor Mr. Tomato."

"I loved old Sally," she said sadly. "You know, I haven't visited him for a month? It's strange. He was happy that I was leaving the country. 'That's the best thing for you to do,' he told me. 'Because sooner or later there will be trouble. They'll find out that you're not my real niece.' That fat lawyer, O'Shaughnessy, sent me five hundred dollars. A wedding present from Sally."

I wanted to be unkind. "I'll give you a present, too. When the wedding happens."

She laughed. "He'll marry me. In church. And with his family there. That's why we're waiting. We'll marry in Rio."

"You're married already. Does he know?"

"What's your problem? Are you trying to destroy the day? It's a beautiful day. Be nice!"

"But it's possible -"

"It isn't possible. That marriage wasn't lawful. It couldn't be." She looked quickly at me. "If you tell anyone about Doc, darling, I'll kill you. I'll hang you by your toes and cut you open."

The horses were in a building on West Sixty-sixth Street. They make television programs there now, I believe. Holly chose an old black and white horse for me. "Don't worry," she said. "She's very safe." That was good because I wasn't a horse rider.

Holly helped me climb on the horse. Then she got onto her own horse, a silver-colored animal. She rode in front of me across Central Park West and onto a riding path.

"See?" she shouted. "It's wonderful!"

And suddenly it was wonderful. I watched the red-yellow colors of Holly's hair and suddenly I loved her. I stopped thinking about myself. I was happy because she was happy and excited.

The horses moved a little faster. We rode in and out of the shadows from the trees and felt the wind on our faces. I was happy to be alive.

A minute later, everything changed.

Suddenly a group of boys jumped out of the trees next to the path. They shouted and threw stones at the horses.

My black and white horse stood up on her back legs, then started to run very fast. I couldn't stop her. I was afraid of falling.

We ran past trees and a lake where small boys were playing with toy boats. We scared their mothers. The women pulled their children away from the horse. Men shouted at us. Later, I remembered their voices. But at that time I only heard Holly. She was racing her horse close behind me.

We rode across the park and out into the busy traffic on Fifth Avenue. But Holly was getting closer. A policeman on a horse was there, too, and they rode next to me, one on each side. My horse began to move more slowly, then finally stopped. I fell off her back. When I stood up, I was shaking. There was a crowd of people around me. The policeman wrote something in his notebook but finally he smiled.

"I'll take the horses back to the Park," he said.

Holly found a taxi for us. "Darling. How do you feel?"

"Fine."

She took my hand. "But you're very cold."

"Then I must be dead."

"Don't be silly. This is serious. Look at me."

The problem was that I couldn't see her. There were three Hollys in front of me, all with white, worried faces.

"I'm OK. I don't feel anything, just stupid."

"Are you sure? You almost died."

"But I didn't die," I said. "And thank you. You saved my life. You're wonderful. Special. I love you."

"You're crazy." She kissed me quickly. Then I saw four Hollys, and then nothing more.

CHAPTER NINE

Holly Becomes Famous

That evening, there were photos of Holly on the front page of the evening newspaper. The next morning, she was on the front pages of two more newspapers. The stories weren't about our horse ride.

BEAUTIFUL GIRL ARRESTED FOR DRUGS CRIME was the main story in one newspaper. The Daily News printed the best picture. Holly was at the entrance to the main city police station, between two big, strong detectives - one male, one female. She was wearing her riding clothes - the jacket and blue jeans - and her hair was a mess. Her eyes were covered by her dark glasses, and there was a cigarette in the corner of her mouth.

Below the picture were these words: Twenty-year-old Holly Golightly, beautiful movie star, is said to play an important part in an international drugs gang. One of her friends is drugs king Salvatore "Sally" Tomato. In this picture, Detectives Patrick Connor and Sheilah Fezzonetti are taking her into the 67th Street police station.

The story continued. There was a photo of a man named Oliver "Father" O'Shaughnessy. He was trying to hide his face with his hat.

New Yorkers were surprised today by the arrest of beautiful Holly Golightly, a twenty-year-old Hollywood star. At the same time, 2 p.m., police caught Oliver O'Shaughnessy, 52, of the Hotel Seabord, West 49th Street. Police have arrested O'Shaughnessy many times since 1934, when he was first sent to prison. Government lawyer Frank L. Donovan says that both Golightly and O'Shaughnessy are important people in an international drugs gang. The boss of the gang is the famous criminal Salvatore "Sally" Tomato. He is spending five years in Sing Sing for buying the services of politicians...

Miss Golightly was arrested in her expensive apartment at a good East Side address. For a few months she was a close friend of millionaire

Rutherford Trawler. The police say that the beautiful actress was carrying messages between Tomato and O'Shaughnessy... A police officer told us, "She went to Sing Sing every week. Tomato gave her messages and she took them back to O'Shaughnessy. As a result, Tomato was able to continue organizing drugs gangs in Mexico, Cuba, Sicily, Tangier, Tehran, and Dakar."

A large number of reporters were waiting at the East 67th Street police station. When O'Shaughnessy, a large red-haired man, arrived, he kicked one cameraman in the stomach. But Miss Golightly, beautiful in jeans and a jacket, did not seem worried.

"Don't ask me what this is about," she told reporters. Then she said in French, "Because I do not know, my darlings!" She continued in English, "Yes, I have visited Sally Tomato. I went to see him every week. Is that wrong? We both believe in God..."

There was more, under a new heading: SAYS SHE USES DRUGS. "Do you use drugs?" our reporter asked. Miss Golightly smiled. "Sometimes," she replied. "They're better for you than brandy. Cheaper, too. But I like brandy better. No, Mr. Tomato never talked to me about drugs. It makes me angry when these people attack him. He's a kind old man."

There is one big mistake in this report. Holly wasn't arrested in her "expensive apartment." She was arrested in my bathroom.

I was lying in a bath full of hot water, still in pain from my horse ride.

Holly, my nurse, was sitting next to the bath. She had a bottle in her hand, of something to lessen the pain. There was a knock at the front door. The door wasn't locked, so Holly called, "Come in."

Mrs. Sapphia Spanella came in with two detectives. One of them was a lady with thick yellow hair.

"Here she is, the woman you want!" shouted Mrs. Spanella. She ran into the bathroom and pointed her finger, first at Holly, then at me. "Look. What a prostitute she is!"

The male detective seemed uncomfortable, but the other detective was clearly enjoying herself. She put a hand on Holly's shoulder and spoke in a surprisingly childish voice. "Come with me, sister. You're going places."

"Take your dirty hands off me, you ugly old lesbian," Holly said, in a calm voice.

This made the female detective angry and she hit Holly hard. Holly dropped the bottle she was holding. It broke into small pieces on the floor. I jumped out of the bath and stepped on it. I cut both of my big toes badly. With no clothes on my body and blood on my feet, I followed the action into the hall.

"Don't forget to feed the cat," Holly told me, as the detectives pushed her down the stairs.

Of course, I believed that Mrs. Spanella called the police. It wasn't the first time. I didn't think how serious it was until later.

That evening Joe Bell arrived. He was carrying the newspapers and he was very unhappy. He walked around the room angrily, while I read the reports.

Then he said, "Do you believe it? Is she part of this business?"

"Yes," I said.

He looked angrily at me. "That's a terrible thing to say. You're her friend!"

"Just a minute," I said. "I'm not saying that she knew about the drugs gang. But, she did carry messages -"

He said, "You're very calm! She'll get ten years in prison. More." He took the newspaper away from me. "You know her friends. Those rich men. Come down to the bar and we'll phone them. Our girl's going to need expensive lawyers."

At his bar he put me next to the telephone with a large brandy. But I didn't know who to call. Jose was in Washington. I didn't know how to reach him there. Rusty Trawler? Not him! Did I know any of her other friends? Maybe she was right. She didn't have any real friends.

I put through a call to Crestview 5-6958 in Beverly Hills, O.J. Berman's number. A woman answered the phone. "Mr. Berman is busy," she said. "Sorry, try later."

Joe Bell was very angry. "Tell them it's important - a matter of life or death. You must ring Rusty Trawler."

First, I spoke to Mr. Trawler's secretary. "Mr. and Mrs. Trawler are eating dinner," he said. "Can I take a message?"

Joe Bell shouted into the telephone. "This is urgent, mister. Life and death."

Suddenly I was talking to - listening to - Mag Wildwood.

"Are you crazy?" she shouted. "We have nothing to say to that woman. That t-t-terrible woman. She was always bad! Drugs and men - that's all she wanted! She belongs in prison. And my husband agrees totally."

I put down the phone. Then I remembered old Doc down in Tulip, Texas. But no - I couldn't call him. Holly wouldn't like me to worry him.

I rang California again but the telephone lines were busy. It took a long time to speak to O.J. Berman.

"Are you calling about the kid?" he asked. "I know about her already. I spoke to Iggy Fitelstein. Iggy's the best lawyer in New York. 'Look after her, Iggy,' I said. 'Send me the bill. But keep my name out of it.' I want to help the kid. She helped me in the past. But she's crazy. It's not a problem. The police only want ten thousand dollars, then they'll send her home. Don't worry. Iggy will get her out tonight. She's probably home already."

CHAPTER TEN

The End of Holly's Dreams?

But she wasn't home. The next morning I went down to feed her cat. She still wasn't there. I didn't have a key to the apartment, so I used the fire escape. The cat was in the bedroom and he wasn't alone. A man was there, standing over a suitcase.

I stepped through the window. The man had a handsome face and shiny hair. He was packing Jose's clothes into the suitcase. I looked at the shoes and suits that Holly was always cleaning.

"Did Mr. Ybarra-Jaegar send you?" I asked.

"I am his cousin," he said, nervously. His English wasn't good.

"Where is Jose?" I asked.

He repeated the question slowly. "Ah, where is he! He is waiting," he said. Then he returned to the suitcase.

So Jose was running away. I wasn't surprised, or sorry, but I was angry.

The cousin closed the suitcase and gave me a letter. "My cousin left this for his friend. Please give it to her."

On the envelope was written: For Miss H. Golightly.

I sat down on Holly's bed and held Holly's cat. I felt very, very sad.

"Yes," I said. "I'll give it to her.

I gave her the letter, though I didn't want to.

It was two mornings later, and I was sitting by her bed in a hospital room. The police took her there on the night after her arrest.

When I arrived, I walked quietly toward her. I was carrying a pack of cigarettes and some flowers. "Well, darling," she greeted me, "I lost the baby." She looked very young. Her pale hair was pushed back from her face, and her eyes without their dark glasses were clear. Was she really so sick?

Yes, she was. "I almost died," she said. "The fat woman almost had me. Have I told you about the fat woman? I didn't know about her myself until my brother died. Then I saw her - she was there in the room with me. She was holding Fred in her arms. She was a terrible, fat old woman in a chair, with Fred on her knee, and she was laughing! When you die, you meet her. The fat woman comes and takes you. I saw her and I went crazy. Then I broke up everything in the apartment. Do you understand?"

Except for O.J. Berman's lawyer, I was her only visitor. There were three other patients in her room. They looked at me with interest and spoke quietly in Italian.

Holly explained. "They think that you're bad for me, darling. You're the man who put me in here."

"But that's not true," I said.

"I can't tell them that. They don't speak English. And I don't want to destroy their fun."

Then she asked me about Jose. "Have you seen him, darling?"

When she saw the letter, she gave a little smile. Suddenly she seemed much older. "Darling," she said. "Open that cupboard and give me my purse. A girl can't read a letter without her lipstick."

Looking in a small mirror, she painted her face. She colored her eyes and her mouth, put on her jewelry and her dark glasses. Now she wasn't a twelve-year-old child. She was a woman.

She opened the letter and read it quickly. Her small smile grew smaller and harder. She asked for a cigarette and started to smoke it. "It tastes terrible. But wonderful." She threw the letter to me. "You can use this when you write a romance. Read it to me. I'd like to hear it."

It began: "My dearest little girl -"

Holly stopped me. "What do you think of the writing?"

"It's OK," I said. "Tight, ordinary, easy to read."

"That's him," she said. "Tight and ordinary. What does he say?"

I know you are different to other women. "My dearest little girl, I loved you. But Now I find that you are too different. Imagine my sadness when I discovered your secrets in the newspapers. I have important plans for the future. I cannot marry a woman like you. I feel very sorry for you and I am not angry with you. I hope you are not angry with me. I must protect my family and my name. Forget me, beautiful child. I have left New York City and gone home. But I hope that God is always with you and your child.

Jose."

"What do you think?" she asked.

"It seems quite honest. And he sounds sad," I replied.

"Sad!"

"But you must understand that it's hard for him -"

Holly didn't want to understand anything. But she wasn't angry. "All right, he's not totally bad. He has his reasons to leave. But I did love him." She started to cry.

The Italian women looked angrily at me. I was pleased. They thought Holly loved me. I felt proud.

I offered her another cigarette and she stopped crying. "Thanks, darling. And thanks for being a bad rider. All that exercise did it. Thanks to you, I'm not going into a home for single mothers. The food in those places is terrible. But I've scared the police. 'I lost the baby because your lesbian officer hit me!' I told them. They're going to pay me a lot of money to stay quiet! I'll make sure they do."

She was making jokes. She didn't want to think about serious matters, about her arrest and the newspapers. She didn't understand the reality of her position. "Holly," I said, seriously. "This isn't a joke. We have to make plans."

"You're too young to be serious. Too small. My problems are my problems. You don't need to think about them."

"You're my friend and I'm worried. What are you going to do?"

She looked out of the window. "Today's Wednesday, isn't it?" she said. "I'll sleep until Saturday-get a good sleep. On Saturday morning, I'll run out to the bank. Then I'll go to the apartment and pick up one or two nightdresses. Then I'll go to Idlewild Airport. As you know, I have a ticket for a seat on an airplane. Because you're my good friend, you can come to the airport with me. You can wave goodbye to me."

"Holly. Holly. You can't do that."

"Why not? Please stop disagreeing with me. I'm not running after Jose. Jose is history, I can't remember him. But I have a good airplane ticket. I'm not going to throw it away. It's already paid for. And I've never been to Brazil."

"You're crazy! What medicine are they giving you in here? Don't you understand, you're a criminal. If you leave the country, they'll put you in prison. They'll throw away the key to the prison door. If you go to Brazil, you can never come home again."

"That's not important. Home is where you're happy. I'm still looking for my home."

"No, Holly, it's stupid. You're not a criminal. You haven't done anything wrong. The police will understand. You must stay here."

She laughed and blew cigarette smoke in my face. But she was listening to me. I looked into her eyes. She was thinking about prison rooms, and doors that closed slowly...

"No!" she said. She put out her cigarette. "I'm going. Maybe the police won't catch me. Don't tell them anything about me. Don't be angry with me, darling."

She put her hand over mine. Suddenly she was speaking seriously. "I talked to the lawyer. Oh, I didn't tell him anything about Rio. If I run away, O.J. has to pay ten thousand dollars. The lawyer doesn't want to lose O.J.'s money. He'll try to stop me. O.J.'s good to me, but I've helped him, too, in the past. I helped him win more than ten thousand dollars in a single game of cards."

"No, this is the real problem: The police want me to speak in court against Sally. They won't put me in prison - they can't prove anything against me. But I refuse to hurt Sally. I'm not a good person, but I will never help send a friend to prison. Never. Not even a friend who's clearly a criminal. Old Sally wasn't always totally honest with me, but he's OK. I'll die before I help the police."

She looked in her mirror and smoothed her lipstick with her finger. "And there's something more. Some places aren't good for a girl. If I help the police, I can't stay here. This neighborhood won't be good for me. And that's not good for a girl who does my kind of work, darling. I don't want to be poor and sad. I don't want to watch Mrs. Rusty Trawler go in and out of Tiffany's. I can't do that."

A nurse came quietly into the room. It was time for visitors to leave the hospital.

Holly said one more thing before I left. "Do something for me, darling. Call one of the newspapers and get a list of the fifty richest men in Brazil. This isn't a joke. The fifty richest men - any color, from any family. And look around my apartment. Find that jewelry you gave me from Tiffany's. I'll need it in Brazil."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Holly Leaves New York

The sky was red on Friday night and there was a bad storm. On Saturday it was raining heavily. Saturday, the day Holly was leaving New York.

"This weather is only good for fish," I said to her. "Your airplane can't fly today."

But Holly wasn't listening to me. She continued to prepare for her trip to Brazil.

I did most of the work. Holly didn't want to come to the apartment building. She was right, too. People were watching the building all the time. Sometimes one man, sometimes more, stood around on the sidewalk. Maybe they were police, or reporters; maybe they were just other interested people. It was impossible to tell.

So Holly left the hospital and went to a bank. Then she went immediately to Joe Bell's bar.

Later that day, Joe came to my apartment. "Nobody followed her, she thinks," he said. "She wants to meet you at the bar in about half an hour. And bring some things for her. Her jewelry. Her guitar. Her shoes and her lipsticks. And a bottle of hundred-year-old brandy. She says you'll find it under her dirty clothes. Oh, and the cat. She wants the cat."

He stopped talking for a minute. Then he said, "But maybe it's wrong to help her. She does some crazy things. She'll get into more trouble. Maybe we should stop her and tell the police. They'll keep her here. I'll go back to the bar and give her a few drinks. Maybe she'll decide not to take the flight."

I ran up and down the fire escape between Holly's apartment and mine.

It was very windy and my clothes were soon wet from the rain. And the cat attacked me. He bit me until my hands were covered in blood. He didn't want to leave the warm apartment in bad weather.

Quickly, I found the things she wanted. I even found the jewelry from Tiffany's. Everything was piled on the floor of my room. Dresses and underclothes and dancing shoes and pretty things. I felt very sad as I packed them in Holly's suitcase. There were too many things for one suitcase, so I put some of her clothes in paper grocery bags.

Then there was the cat. He was still fighting me. I couldn't carry him and the suitcase and the bags. Finally, I found an old cloth bag, put him inside, and tied the top.

Many years ago, I walked from New Orleans to Nancy's Landing, Mississippi, almost five hundred miles. The reason isn't important. But that long walk was easier than the short walk to Joe Bell's bar.

The guitar filled with rain. Rain softened the paper bags, and some of Holly's clothes and jewelry fell through them onto the sidewalk. The wind pushed me, and the cat attacked its bag and screamed at me.

And I was frightened. Now I understood Jose, because I was frightened in the same way as him. Were people watching me? I was helping someone run away from the police. I was a criminal, too.

In the bar, Holly said, "You're late. Did you bring the brandy?"

The cat climbed out of its bag and jumped onto her shoulder. Holly was laughing, excited. She opened the bottle. "This brandy was for me and Jose. 'We'll drink this,' I told him, 'every year, on the same day as our wedding.' But that's finished now. Mr. Bell, sir, give me three glasses."

"You only need two," Joe Bell told her. "I refuse to drink with you. You're crazy to leave New York."

"Please, Mr. Bell," she said. "A lady doesn't disappear every day. Have a drink with her."

"No," he replied angrily. "I'm not going to drink with you. This isn't a party and I'm not going to help you."

That was a lie. A few minutes later, a large car and driver stopped outside the bar. Holly noticed it first. She put down her brandy glass.

"Well, darling," she said, "is this the judge? Has he come to get me?"

I saw Joe Bell's red face. Did he really call the police? But Joe said, "It's nothing. Just a car that I paid for. It will take you to the airport."

He turned away from us and started washing some glasses.

"Kind, dear Mr. Bell. Look at me, sir," Holly said.

He couldn't look at her. He pulled some flowers from behind the bar and pushed them toward her. She didn't catch them in time and they fell on the floor.

"Goodbye," he said. He didn't want to cry in front of her. He ran to the men's bathroom and we heard the door lock.

The driver of the car was very calm. In his job, he saw many strange things. He didn't say anything about Holly's suitcase and grocery bags. And his face didn't change when, in the back of the car, Holly took off her clothes. She was still wearing her riding clothes - the jacket and jeans.

"The police came for me so quickly," she said. "There wasn't time to change my clothes." Quickly, she put on her little black dress.

We didn't talk after that. Holly was lost in thought and didn't look at me.

She sang quietly to herself and drank brandy from the bottle. She moved to the front of her seat so she could look out of the windows. Was she looking for an address? Or taking a last look at New York? But it was neither of these.

Suddenly she spoke. "Stop here," she ordered the driver.

He stopped the car by a sidewalk in Spanish Harlem. It was a strange neighborhood, colorful but frightening. There were religious pictures next to photos of movie stars on the walls of buildings. The strong wind moved empty cans and dirty newspapers up and down the sidewalk. But the rain had stopped now and the sun was beginning to break through the cloud.

Holly stepped out of the car. She took the cat with her. Holding him in her arms, she smoothed his head.

"What do you think?" she asked. "Is this the right place for you? You're a fighter and this is a hard neighborhood. There are plenty of trash cans to look in. Lots of gangs of wild cats to join. So go!"

She dropped him onto the sidewalk. He didn't move, but lifted his face to her and questioned her with his yellow eyes.

"Go!" she shouted, angrily. He came closer to her legs. "Get away from me!"

Then she jumped into the car again and closed the door.

"Go," she told the driver. "Go. Go."

"That was terrible!" I said angrily. "You really are unkind."

We traveled for a block before she replied. "I told you. We met by the river one day. He doesn't belong to me. I don't belong to him. We didn't make any promises. We never -"

She stopped speaking. Her face was very white and unhappy.

The car stopped for a traffic light. She opened the door and ran down the street, and I ran after her. She was looking for the cat.

But the cat wasn't there. There was nobody, nothing on the street except an old drunk and women with a group of children. As Holly ran up and down the block, more children came out from doorways. Some ladies looked out of their windows. Holly was shouting, "You. Cat. Where are you? Here, cat."

She didn't stop calling until a boy stopped her. He was holding a dirty old cat by the back of its neck. "Do you want a nice cat, miss? Give me a dollar for this one."

The car was following us. I took Holly's arm and walked her toward it. At the door of the car, she stopped. She looked past me, past the boy with his cat. He was still talking. "Half a dollar? Twenty cents? It's not much for this cat."

She held my arm very tightly. There were tears in her eyes. "Oh, he does belong to me. He was mine," she said.

Then I made her a promise. "I'll come back and find your cat. I'll look after him, too. I promise."

She smiled - that sad new smile. "And me?" she asked quietly. "Who will look after me? I'm very scared, darling. For the first time, I'm really scared. This will happen again and again. I never know what's mine. Not until I throw it away. The fat woman - she's not important. Unhappiness - that's nothing. This is important, though. Not belonging. I'm so very, very scared."

She stepped in the car, and sat down slowly in the seat.

"Sorry, driver," she said. "Let's go."

CHAPTER TWELVE

Where is Holly Now?

TOMATO'S GIRL IS MISSING and BEAUTIFUL ACTRESS: KILLED BY DRUGS GANG? Those were the stories in the newspapers during the next few weeks. Later, they reported: TOMATO'S GIRL SEEN IN RIO.

The American police didn't try to bring her back, and soon Holly's name disappeared from the newspapers. I saw it only once in a report on Christmas Day, when Sally Tomato died in Sing Sing. He was an old man with a sick heart and he died in his bed.

The winter months passed slowly. I didn't hear anything from Holly. The owner of the apartment building sold her things - the bed with the shiny white cover, her pictures, her chairs. She loved those chairs.

A new tenant moved into the apartment. His name was Quaintance Smith and he had a lot of male visitors. He was as noisy as Holly. I often heard loud music, and voices, and men shouting. But this time Mrs. Spanella didn't say anything.

"He's a nice young man," she said to me. "I like him."

She always smiled when she saw him. She even gave him something for his eye each time one of his "friends" hit him.

But in the spring I received a card. The message was written in pencil and signed with a lipstick kiss.

Brazil was terrible, but Buenos Aires is wonderful. It's not Tiffany's, but almost as good. I'm spending all my time with a handsome Spanish man. Do I love him?

I think so. I'm looking for a place to live. (The Spanish man has a wife and seven children.) I'll send my address when I have one. Then she wrote in French:

Much love.

She never sent the address. Maybe she never had one. I was sad because I wanted to write to her. I had a lot to tell her. I sold two stories. The Trawlers were divorcing and fighting about money. I was moving out of the brown stone apartment building because it was full of memories of Holly.

But most important, I had news about the cat.

I kept my promise and I found him. For weeks after work I walked through the streets of Spanish Harlem. Many times, I saw a red cat with yellow eyes - but it wasn't him. He was gone, lost in New York.

But one day, one cold Sunday afternoon when the winter sun was shining, I found him.

He was sitting in the window of a house. The paint around the window was new. The room looked warm and comfortable. There were plants in pots on each side of him.

He had a name. I was sure that he had a name now. He was in a place where he belonged.

I hope Holly has found a place where she belongs, too.

- THE END -

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